

Warfarin Words

Warfarin and diet —

What's all the confusion about?



“Healthy eating and warfarin—the perfect combination”

Welcome to the third edition of Warfarin Words. This newsletter aims to answer all your questions about warfarin and related issues. If you have anything you'd like us to cover in future issues please let us know—email: info@anticoagulation.com.au

Dietary advice for people taking warfarin

For more detailed information visit www.anticoagulation.com.au or speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

“What foods are safe to eat while taking warfarin?”

“How much can I eat?”

“Do I have to stop eating all green vegetables?” “How do I know what my diet is doing to my INR?”

These are some of the most common questions asked by people taking warfarin. The short answer is that all foods are safe in moderation. Because warfarin works against vitamin K in your liver, changes in the amount of vitamin K in

your body can change the way warfarin works.

Most vitamin K comes from the food you eat. The issue of vitamin K containing foods causes a lot of confusion.

There are a few simple rules to follow.

1. Try to maintain a balanced diet.

Eat all foods in moderation and **include** foods that contain vitamin K. You don't need to eat the same things everyday, but try and include about

the same amount of foods high in vitamin K in your diet from one week to the next.

2. Remember that diet does affect the INR

Big changes in your diet can affect your INR control. If you go on a diet for weight loss, dramatically change the types of food you eat, or are sick and can't eat for a few days, it's a good idea to tell your doctor and get your INR checked.

3. Know that vitamin K

helps INR control.

Cutting foods that contain vitamin K out of the diet completely actually makes it harder to keep the INR stable. Eating a balanced amount of vitamin K regularly (e.g. from week to week) helps to stabilise the INR.

*Note: Some people take potassium supplements such as Slow K. Potassium is symbolised by the letter 'K'. Vitamin K is **not** the same as potassium.*

Vitamin K content of common foods

—aim to eat a consistent amount of vitamin K from week to week

Foods with low vitamin K content	Foods with moderate vitamin K content	Foods with high vitamin K content
Alfalfa	Asparagus	Broccoli (cooked)
Beans (green)	Avocado	Brussels sprouts
Carrots & Cauliflower	Red Cabbage	Cabbage (raw)
Celery, Corn & Potato	Green Peas	Endive (raw)
Breads, Cereal	Lettuce (iceberg)	Lettuce (gourmet)
Rice	Pickle, dill	Parsley
Fruit & juices (mostly)*	Beans (snap)	Silver beet (cooked)
Cheese (cheddar), Milk	Cheese (blue)	Spinach (cooked & raw)
Eggs & Butter	Margarine	Mayonnaise
Sunflower & Sesame oil	Olive oil	Canola & Soybean oil
Fish, Meat, Pork, Chicken	Abalone	Liver

Five things you should do while on warfarin:

1. Aim to eat a healthy, balanced diet.
2. Have your INR checked more often if you make large changes in your diet or if you are sick and unable to eat as much as usual.
3. Know that it is safe to include foods in your diet that contain vitamin K.
4. Try to eat about the same amount of foods with vitamin K from week to week.
5. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about your warfarin treatment.